

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 CAB-05 FAA-00 DOTE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1912

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

SECDEF WASHDC

USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GER

SACRECONCEN OFFUTT AFB NEBRASKA

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE WASHDC

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 4259

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS, SW, US

SUBJECT: CAB COMMITTEE FILING REPORT ON JANUARY 1977 INCIDENTS
OVER BALTIC

REF: (A) STATE 48985 (042304Z MAR 77), (B) STOCKHOLM 1053
(091445Z MAR 77)

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE, PUBLISHED IN DAGENS NYHETER ON
OCTOBER 5, DISCUSSES THE CONTENT OF A REPORT PREPARED BY A
CIVIL AVIATION BOARD INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE CONCERNING
FLIGHTS OF FOREIGN MILITARY AIRCRAFT OVER THE BALTIC.

2. "COMMITTEE ASKS FOR IMPROVED SAFETY IN BALTIC AVIATION.
RADAR SCANNING MUST BE IMPROVED IN ORDER TO HEIGHTEN AIR
SAFETY OVER THE BALTIC. ALSO AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT IS
NEEDED WHICH WOULD REQUIRE ALL MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO
OBSERVE THE SAME RULES AND REGULATIONS AS APPLY FOR CIVIL
AVIATION FLYING OVER INTERNATIONAL WATERS. THESE DEMANDS
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ARE MADE BY AN EXPERT GROUP IN AN ACCIDENT COMMITTEE
APPOINTED BY THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT TO STUDY THE
PROBLEM OF A NUMBER OF NEAR COLLISIONS INVOLVING MILITARY
AND CIVIL AIRCRAFT OVER THE BALTIC EARLIER THIS YEAR.
THE COMMITTEE HAS INVESTIGATED A TOTAL OF FOUR SUCH
INCIDENTS BETWEEN JANUARY AND MAY, ALL OF WHICH INVOLVED
US MILITARY AIRCRAFT--RECONNAISSANCE OR 'SPY' PLANES--

AND CIVIL MACHINES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES: SOVIET AEROFLOT, FINNISH FINNAIR, BRITISH AIRWAYS AND JAPAN AIRLINES. ALL FOUR INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN AIR CORRIDORS WHERE THE PASSENGER PLANES WERE FLYING ACCORDING TO THE PRESCRIBED REGULATIONS AND FOLLOWING A PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED FLIGHT PLAN. THE MILITARY AIRCRAFT CROSSED THE AIR CORRIDORS UNEXPECTEDLY AND UNANNOUNCED. THERE IS A VERY BUSY AIR TRAFFIC OVER THE BALTIC AND IT IS ALSO KNOWN AND COUMENTED THAT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THIS REGION IS VERY GREAT. THE BASIC REASON FOR THESE INCIDENTS, ALL OF WHICH ARE DISCRIBED AS SERIOUS, IS DIVERGENT REGULATIONS FOR CIVIL AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT. THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION WHICH HAS APPLIED SINCE 1944 EMBRACES CIVIL AIRCRAFT ONLY. THE CLAUSE ON MILITARY AIRCRAFT HERE SIMPLY STATES THAT 'IN THE ISSUING OF THEIR REGULATIONS FOR STATE-OWNED AIRCRAFT (I.E., MILITARY AIRCRAFT), GOVERNMENTS SHALL GIVE DUE CONSIDERATION TO CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY REQUIREMENTS.' THE SWEDISH ACCIDENT COMMITTEE ELECTED TO CONCENTRATE ON ONE OF THESE INCIDENTS IN PARTICULAR SINCE THEY WERE ALL SIMILAR IN DETAIL. THIS WAS THE NEAR COLLISION BETWEEN AN AEROFLOT PLANE AND A FOUR-ENGINE US RECONNAISSANCE. THIS OCCURRED EAST OF GOTLAND IN THE AIR CORRIDOR BETWEEN RONNE AND MOSCOW, INSIDE A 'FLIGHT INFORMATION AREA' THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR. THE SOVIET CREW CLAIMED THE US MACHINE CROSSED THE CORRIDOR LESS THAN

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100 METERS FROM THEM. THE WHOLE THING TOOK ONLY 2-3 SECONDS AND THERE WAS NO CHANCE OF MAKING AN EVASIVE MANEUVER. BOTH AIRCRAFT WERE FLYING AT 800-900 KM/H. THE US PLANE HAD SUBMITTED A FLIGHT PLAN FOR FLYING 'IN AN UNSPECIFIED AREA AND ALTITUDE.' THE US CREW CLAIMED THEY SIGHTED THE SOVIET MACHINE AT A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 35 KM AND THAT THEY PASSED WITH AN ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 150 M AND A DISTANCE OF 450-500 M. ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS THE ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE SHALL BE AT LEAST 600 M--ACCORDING TO THE SOVIET REGULATIONS AT LEAST 1000 M. THE CREW OF THE AEROFLOT MACHINE REGARDED THE INCIDENT AS AN AIR SAFETY HAZARD. THE SURPRISE ELEMENT COULD HAVE RESULTED IN AN EVASIVE MANEUVER THAT MIGHT HAVE WORSENERED THE SITUATION ALTOGETHER. THE COMMITTEE HAS NOT COMMITTED ITSELF ON THE ISSUE OF WHO IS TO BLAME. THE IMPORTANT THING IS, INSISTS THE COMMITTEE, THAT MEASURES BE TAKEN TO BRING ABOUT UNIFORM REGULATIONS FOR CIVIL AND MILITARY AIRCARFT. THE SWEDISH DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION HAS WRITTEN TO THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN STOCKHOLM REGARDING THE US FLIGHTS OVER THE BALTIC. THE EMBASSY HAS REPLIED THAT 'MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN SO AS NOT TO WORSEN THE

SITUATION IN THE AIR CORRIDORS OVER THE BALTIC."

3. EMBASSY COMMENT FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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